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### An Investigation of Attitudes and Opinions of Readers Toward the Sioux Valley News

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AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS  
OF READERS TOWARD THE SIOUX VALLEY NEWS

BY  
NANCY SUNDLING PRINCE

A thesis submitted  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree Master of Science, Major in  
Journalism, South Dakota  
State University

1968

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AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS  
OF READERS TOWARD THE SIOUX VALLEY NEWS

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree, but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Thesis Adviser /

Date

Head, Journalism Department

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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NSP

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
<u>Reasons for Undertaking the Study.</u> . . . . .	1
<u>Historical Data.</u> . . . . .	2
<u>Objectives of the Study.</u> . . . . .	3
II. METHODOLOGY. . . . .	5
<u>Procedure.</u> . . . . .	5
<u>Categories of Analysis</u> . . . . .	6
III. RESULTS AND FINDINGS . . . . .	8
<u>Attitudinal Dimensions</u> . . . . .	11
<u>Responsibility for Accuracy.</u> . . . . .	12
<u>Political and Religious Fairness</u> . . . . .	14
<u>Representativeness</u> . . . . .	16
<u>Independence from Pressure</u> . . . . .	18
<u>Adequacy of News Content</u> . . . . .	20
<u>Check on Government.</u> . . . . .	22
<u>Authoritarianism</u> . . . . .	24
<u>Confidence in Leadership on Political</u> <u>Issues and Candidates.</u> . . . . .	26
<u>Responsibility for Advertising Content</u> . . . . .	28
<u>Human Worth and Dignity.</u> . . . . .	30

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Chapter	Page
<u>General Satisfaction</u> . . . . .	32
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	35
<u>Summary</u> . . . . .	35
<u>Conclusions</u> . . . . .	36
<u>Recommendations for Further Study</u> . . . . .	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	39
APPENDIX A-- <u>A Classification of Different</u> <u>Categories</u> . . . . .	41
APPENDIX B-- <u>Number and Percentage of Favorable</u> <u>and Unfavorable Answers and the</u> <u>Questions Not Answered in Study A.</u> . . . . .	42
APPENDIX C-- <u>Number and Percentage of Favorable</u> <u>and Unfavorable Answers and the Questions</u> <u>Not Answered in Study B.</u> . . . . .	43
APPENDIX D-- <u>Questions Eliminated</u> . . . . .	45
APPENDIX E-- <u>Example of Covering Letter That</u> <u>Accompanied the Mailing of the</u> <u>Questionnaires</u> . . . . .	47
APPENDIX F-- <u>Example of an Individual Question-</u> <u>naire Sent to Each Person.</u> . . . . .	48

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Answers to Questions Answered Unfavorably . . . . .	9

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Responsibility of Accuracy . . . . .	13
2. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Fairness . . . . .	15
3. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Representativeness . . . . .	17
4. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Independence from Pressure . . . . .	19
5. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Adequacy of News Content . . . . .	21
6. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Check on Government. . . . .	23
7. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Authoritarianism . . . . .	25
8. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Confidence in Leadership on Political Issues and Candidates . . . . .	27
9. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Responsibility for Advertising Content . . . . .	29
10. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Human Worth and Dignity. . . . .	31
11. Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of General Satisfaction . . . . .	33



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Reasons for Undertaking the Study

In a rural community one of the few methods the local newspaper has to determine the attitudes of its readers is the subscription list. Most publishers of weekly newspapers assume if the subscription list is large, the residents are pleased with the newspaper; if the subscription list is small, the residents are not pleased with the newspaper. The author and editor of The Sioux Valley News did not believe this to be the case in Canton, South Dakota. From an interview with the editor, it was found that the majority of area residents purchase The Sioux Valley News in one of the two drug stores, in one of the four grocery stores, or in The Sioux Valley News office. Therefore, if the subscription list for Canton and Lincoln county residents was small, it would not necessarily mean the residents were dissatisfied with the newspaper.

Another method of determining reader attitudes toward the newspaper is by letters to the editor. Letters received by newspapers probably do not represent all the attitudes the readers possess toward the newspaper.

The author decided to administer a test devised by James E. Brinton, Chilton R. Bush and Thomas M. Newell to determine the attitudes readers have toward their newspaper. The test appears in their book The Newspaper and Its Public, Institute for Communications Research, Department of Communications and Journalism, Stanford University: Stanford University, 1957. It was hoped this test would provide reliable data on the attitudes people in the Canton area have toward The Sioux Valley News.

### Historical Data

The Sioux Valley News is a weekly newspaper published in a town with a population of 2,600, located in the southeast corner of South Dakota. Canton is the county seat of an agricultural county which produces corn, beans and oats. Farming is the major occupation in the county.

The Sioux Valley News began publication in 1872 with Colonel Arthur Linn as the first publisher. Robert Miller, a former Yankton, South Dakota resident, was the first editor of the newspaper. Linn continued as publisher of the newspaper until 1877 when Neuman C. Nash purchased The Sioux Valley News and operated the newspaper until 1912.

From 1912 through 1931, S. B. Averill was editor and publisher of The Sioux Valley News. The Canton Advertisers' Farmer's Leader was also published in Canton during the 1920s and early 1930s. It merged with The Sioux Valley News in the early part of the 1930s.

In 1931 W. G. Smith and sons of Rock Rapids, Iowa became editors and publishers of the newspaper. Andrew M. Johnson became a partner in the corporation in 1937 and managed the newspaper until World War II. During World War II, The Sioux Valley News was managed by Adrian Deveraus and later by Mrs. C. C. Jackson. Following the war John Sittner became manager and was succeeded by Gene Chamberlain. In 1962 The Sioux Valley News was owned by Paul Smith, Fred Smith and Andrew M. Johnson.

John Vickerman became editor of The Sioux Valley News in 1965. Vickerman is the current editor of the newspaper and a member of the corporation. He received the bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and studied for the master's degree in political science at the University of South Dakota.

### Objectives of the Study

A weekly newspaper needs to measure its value to the community it services. It needs to know how highly it is valued in general and how highly it is valued in certain areas.

To discover the value of The Sioux Valley News to its readers, the Bush, Brinton and Newell test was used to measure the public's attitude toward the newspaper. The test was used by the researcher to determine how the newspaper was valued on the particular dimensions it encompasses.

It was the objective of the author that through such an investigation it would be possible to determine the attitudes of

readers toward The Sioux Valley News. Two studies were conducted a year apart. By using two studies, the author hoped not only to measure the readers' attitudes at two different times, but to note if a change in their attitudes had occurred in that amount of time. The first is referred to as Study A, the second as Study B.

Attitudinal dimensions were charted. Attitudinal dimensions are a component of a person's total attitude toward something. Although the reader may have an attitude of favorableness or unfavorableness toward his newspaper, he will also have more intense attitudes, some of which may be more favorable than others. For example, he may be highly favorable toward the newspaper so far as adequacy of news content is concerned, but less favorable toward it on the grounds of political and economic fairness.

The dimensions used under this measure of attitudes were: responsibility for accuracy, political and religious fairness, representativeness, independence from pressure, adequacy of news content, check on government, authoritarianism, confidence in leadership on political issues and candidates, responsibility for advertising content, human worth and dignity and general satisfaction.

Therefore, the objective of the investigation was to determine if there was a change over a one-year period in the attitudes of the readers as measured by the attitudinal dimensions.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY

The object of the investigation was to measure readers' attitudes toward The Sioux Valley News at two separate time periods and to see if a change had occurred in these attitudes during the one-year period between the checks. In addition the author hoped to give the editor an idea of what readers thought of the newspaper.

#### Procedure

The Brinton, Bush and Newell test consists of 56 multiple-choice short-answer questions. Because many of the questions in the original test were designed to test attitudes toward daily newspapers, some of the questions were eliminated.

Twenty questions from Brinton, Bush, Newell test were omitted because they deal with subjects unlikely to make news for the Canton newspaper. Questions deemed not usable were similar to the following which reads: "If a Negro got in a serious fight with a white man in this area, how fair would the \_\_\_\_\_ be toward the Negro?" This question was eliminated because of the non-existence of minority groups in Lincoln county. Questions concerning labor unions were also eliminated because of the small number of labor union members living in the area.

A probability sample of 200 was used in each of the two studies. Due to the majority of readers in the trade area buying The Sioux Valley News instead of subscribing to it, a list of people living in the trade area was obtained from the Lincoln County Court House. The trade area was defined by the editor of the newspaper and the investigator as the towns and townships in Lincoln county whose residents shopped mainly in Canton.

The list included residents of Canton, Fairview, Harrisburg and Worthing. The list also included persons residing in the following townships: Canton, Dayton, Eden, Fairview, Highland, LaValley, Lincoln, Lynn, Norway and Pleasant.

From this list of 2,296 names, a sample of 200 names were chosen at each survey time by means of single random probability to be included in the investigation. Questionnaires were sent in each study to 100 women and 100 men in the springs of 1966 and 1967.

#### Categories of Analysis

The investigation sought to determine not only if the readers were favorable or unfavorable to The Sioux Valley News, but also the degree of favorableness. Therefore, several categories were used.

The following demographic questions were added to the questionnaire.

Sex (    )Female      (    )Male

Age \_\_\_\_\_ in years

Education \_\_\_\_\_ last year of school completed

Marital status ( )Single ( )Married ( )Widowed

( )Divorced

Length of residence in the Canton area \_\_\_\_\_ years

Where do you live? ( )City ( )Farm

Do you subscribe to another newspaper? ( )Daily ( )Weekly

( )None

Please check the situation that applies to you. ( )I subscribe

to The Sioux Valley News. ( )I do not read The Sioux

Valley News. ( )I purchase The Sioux Valley News each week.

The author had hypothesized that a difference in attitudes might be found among these various categories. However, when the results were tabulated, no differences could be found.

The author chose to portray the attitudes in graph form and to list the questions in each attitudinal dimension to enable the reader to analyze the differences between Study A and Study B with some ease.

The chi square test of significance was chosen to see if a significant difference occurred between Study A and Study B. The following formula was used for testing the agreement between observed and expected frequencies:  $\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O-e)^2}{e}$  in which O = the observed or obtained frequencies in the various categories, e = corresponding frequencies expected under some hypothesis.

### CHAPTER III

#### FINDINGS

The responses to the questionnaires seem to indicate that the people of the Canton area tend to have a high regard for The Sioux Valley News.

Of the 200 questionnaires sent out in Study A in the spring of 1966, 76 or 38 per cent were returned. Of the 200 questionnaires sent out in Study B in the spring of 1967, 73 or 32 per cent were returned. According to Selltiz in Research Methods in Social Relations on page 241, "When questionnaires are mailed to a random sample of the population, the proportion of returns is usually low, varying from about 10 to 50 per cent."

The objective of this investigation was not only to determine how the local residents regard The Sioux Valley News but to determine if their attitudes would change in a year.

From the figures in Appendix B it can be seen that in Study A all the questions were answered favorably. The figures in Appendix C show that in Study B 33 questions or about 94.2 per cent of the questions were answered favorably and 2 questions or about 5.8 per cent unfavorably.

Appendices B and C show the number who favored or did not favor The Sioux Valley News, and the ones who did not know how to answer, or did not answer the question.



Table 1 shows the two questions which were answered unfavorably by respondents in Study B. One question (No. 10) concerns names: Are names of some local people in the paper very often, while interesting news about other local people seldom gets in the paper? The other question (No. 12) deals with personal friends: Would it be easier for a personal friend of the owners to get a story in the paper than for a person who didn't know the owners at all?

TABLE 1

## Answers to Questions Answered Unfavorably

Questions	Responses	Number	Percentage
No. 10	There's a lot of truth in it	13	18
	There's some truth in it	27	37
	There's very little truth in it	17	23
	It's not true at all	9	12
	Don't know and not answered	7	10
No. 12	No, certainly not	14	19
	No, probably not	15	21
	Yes, probably	22	30
	Yes, certainly	9	12
	Don't know and not answered	13	18

Question number 10. How true is this statement: The names of some local people are in The Sioux Valley News very often, while interesting news about many other local people hardly ever gets in the paper.

Question number 12. Would it be easier for a personal friend of the owners of The Sioux Valley News to get a story in the paper than for a person who didn't know the owners at all?

All the responses with the exception of numbers 10 and 12 were favorable in Study B to The Sioux Valley News.

A possible reason for question number 10 being answered unfavorably is that the respondents did not take into consideration the fact that in a small town, many people seem to participate on several committees. In communities the size of Canton there always seems to be a small group of citizens that show leadership initiative. These citizens are usually involved in several community functions, and naturally tend to have their names in the local newspaper more often than other citizens.

A possible refutation to question number 10 is question 24 stating: "When someone in this area does something that helps the community, does The Sioux Valley News usually give him credit for it?" The question was answered in Study B highly favorably 68-3, or a percentage of 94-4.

In answering question 12, respondents gave a 42 per cent unfavorable answer as compared to a 40 per cent favorable. Also 18 per cent did not know how to answer this question.

A possible explanation for this response could be that the community leaders in a small town are often friends of the editor. They often work closely for improving the community. Usually

the community leaders are found to be personal friends because of their common educational background.

### Attitudinal Dimensions

From the questions asked in the investigation, eleven attitudinal dimensions were charted. As defined in Chapter 1 attitudinal dimensions are a component of a person's total attitude toward something. In the following figures the respondents' replies from both Study A and B have been charted.

Four questions were added in the second study and eliminated when the results were tabulated. Each question was designed to determine a different attitudinal dimension, but other questions in the same dimension were found to be sufficient. The questions added and later eliminated from the results were questions 4, 20, 27 and 30 in Appendix F.

Chi square was used by the author to determine if a difference existed between Studies A and B in the attitudinal dimensions. The level of significance was set at .01.

A significant difference was shown to exist at the .01 level in the attitudinal dimensions of responsibility for accuracy and authoritarianism. No significant differences were found to exist in the other nine attitudinal dimensions.

### Responsibility for Accuracy

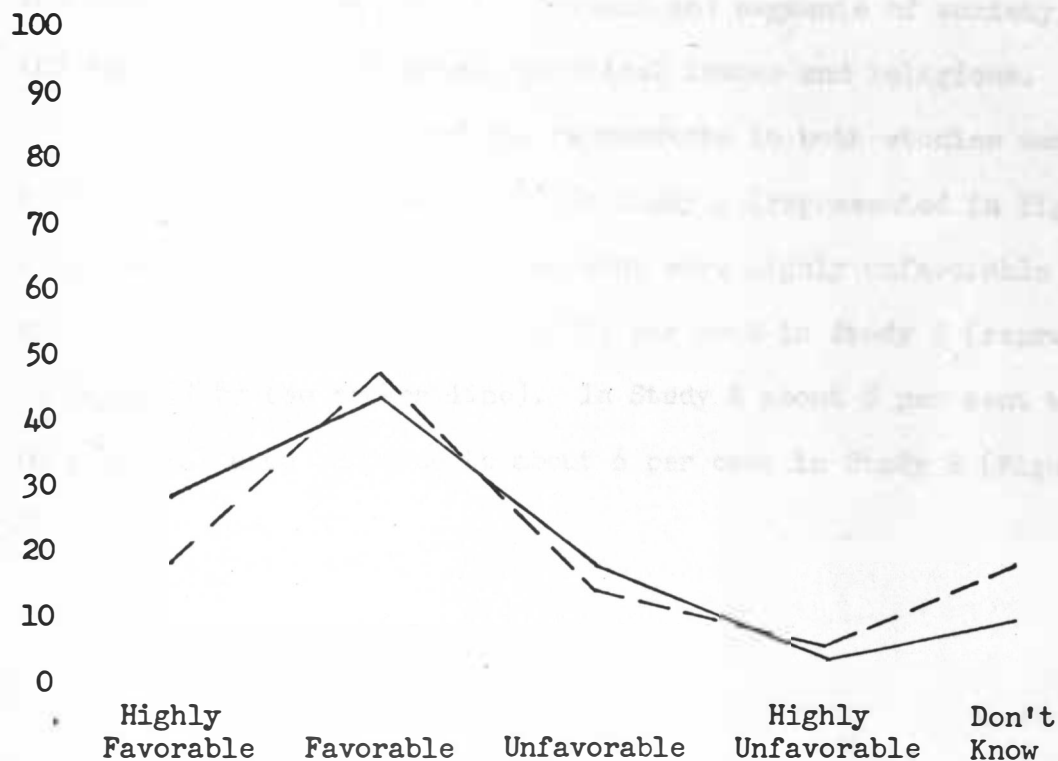
This dimension means the performance of the newspaper in carrying out its covenant with the reader to present the news truthfully and accurately and not sensationally.

A significant difference was found by the investigator between Study A and Study B. The difference was due to the number of respondents in Study B checking the "don't know" response (Study B is represented in Figure 1 by the broken line). In Study B 17.6 per cent of the respondents checked this response compared with only 7 per cent in Study A (represented in Figure 1 by the solid line) checking the response.

About 73 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable and about 20 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable in Study A. In Study B about 65 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable and about 17 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Responsibility for Accuracy



The answers to the following questions have been grouped and graphically portrayed above.

1. How accurate is The Sioux Valley News in its local news stories?
2. If you heard a news item over the radio and then read a conflicting version of the same story in The Sioux Valley News which one would you believe?
3. How often does The Sioux Valley News in its news columns and headlines, try to make a happening sound more exciting than it really is?

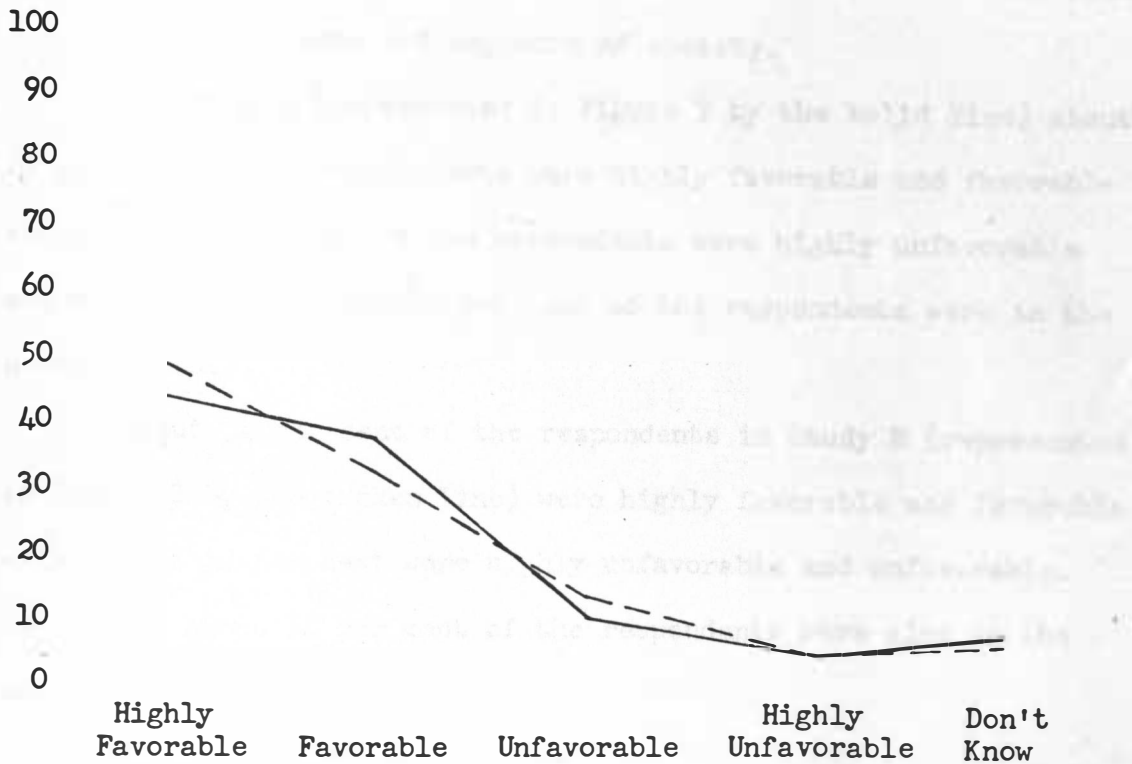
### Political and Religious Fairness

This dimension means the impartial treatment, in the news and editorial columns, of all citizens and segments of society, and especially of candidates, political issues and religions.

About 79 per cent of the respondents in both studies were highly favorable and favorable. In Study A (represented in Figure 2 by the solid line) about 13 per cent were highly unfavorable and unfavorable compared to about 15 per cent in Study B (represented in Figure 2 by the broken line). In Study A about 8 per cent were in a neutral area compared to about 6 per cent in Study B (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

## Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Fairness



5. Does The Sioux Valley News usually present both sides of important political issues?

6. If The Sioux Valley News was against a man who was running for public office, would it be fair to him or not?

7. Does The Sioux Valley News seem fair to all religious groups?

### Representativeness

This dimension means representing, in the news and editorial columns, all citizens and segments of society.

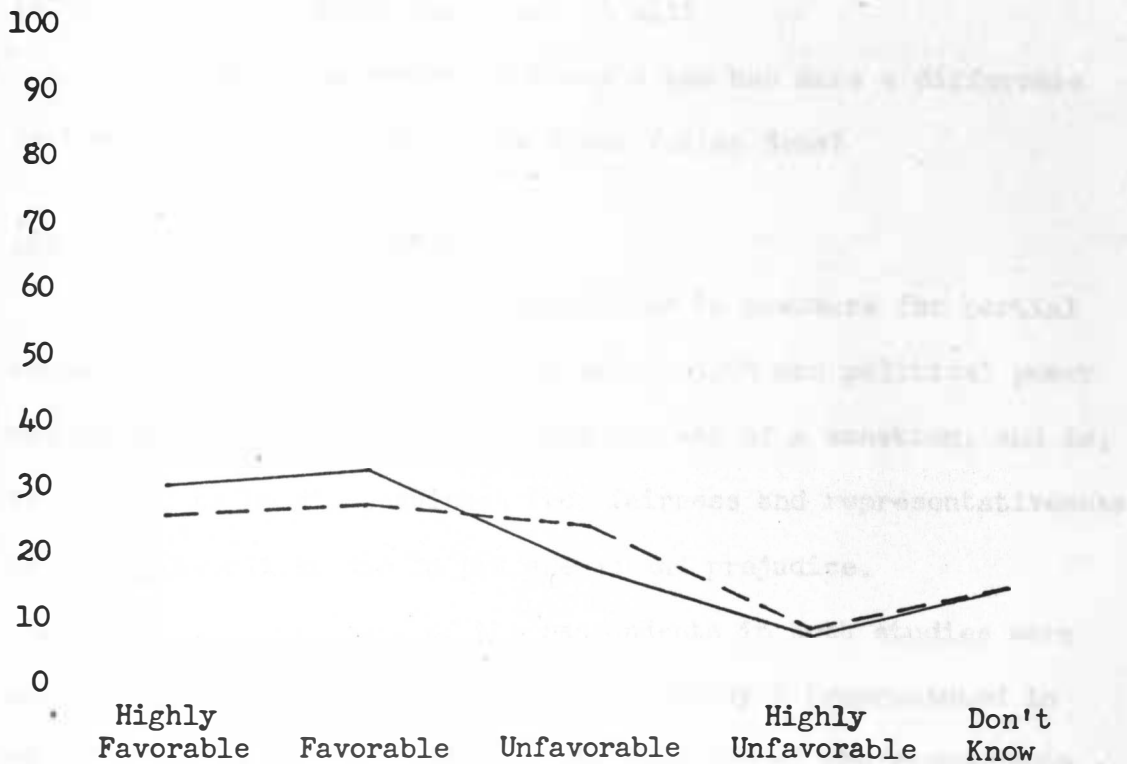
In Study A (represented in Figure 3 by the solid line) about 62 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable and about 24 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. About 14 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area.

About 54 per cent of the respondents in Study B (represented in Figure 3 by the broken line) were highly favorable and favorable while about 32 per cent were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. In Study B about 14 per cent of the respondents were also in the neutral area. (Figure 3)



FIGURE 3

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Representativeness



8. Do you think The Sioux Valley News really cares about the poor people in this town?

9. Does a wealthy man get better treatment in The Sioux Valley News than a poor man?

10. How true is this statement: The names of some local people are in The Sioux Valley News very often, while interesting news about many other local people hardly ever gets in the paper.

11. If a good friend of the owners of The Sioux Valley News got arrested for drunken driving, would the paper print the story?

12. Would it be easier for a personal friend of the owners of The Sioux Valley News to get a story in the paper than for a person who didn't know the owners at all?

13. Does the amount of money a man has make a difference in the treatment he gets in The Sioux Valley News?

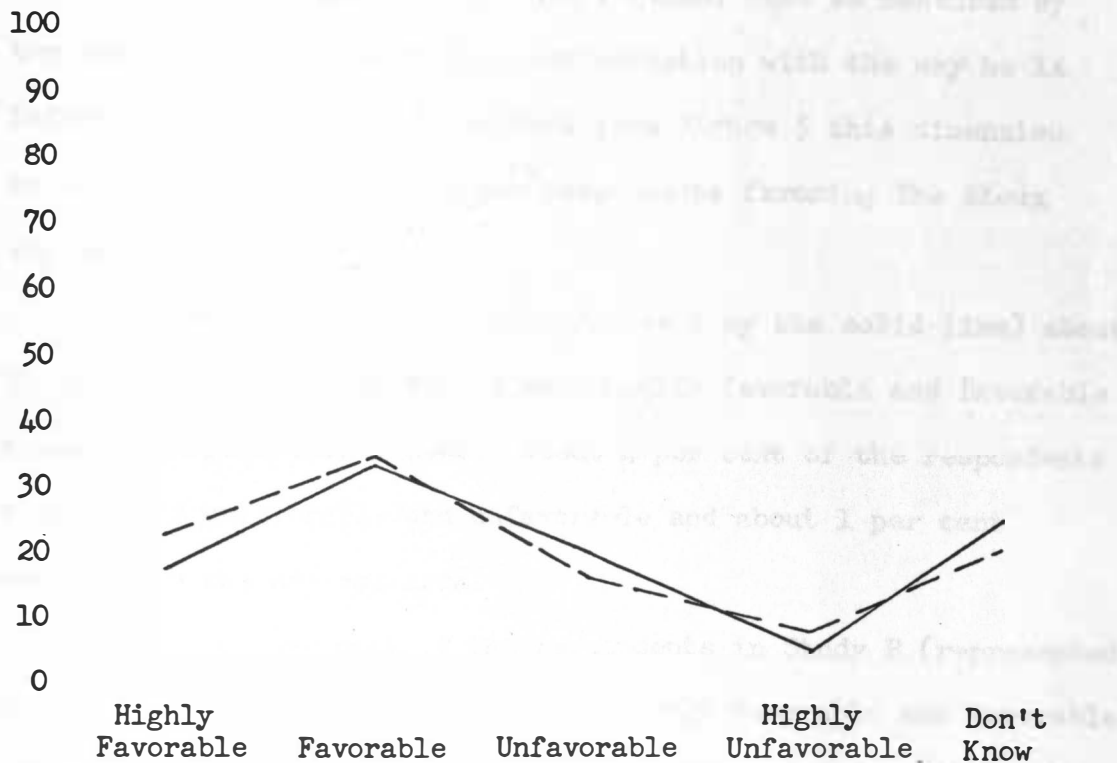
#### Independence from Pressure

This dimension implies resistance to pressure for partial treatment of advertisers, persons with wealth and political power and others. This is favoritism due to fear of a sanction, and is, therefore, to be distinguished from fairness and representativeness, which is favoritism due to preference and prejudice.

About 25 per cent of the respondents in both studies were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. In Study A (represented in Figure 4 by the solid line) about 50 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable compared to about 54 per cent in Study B (represented in Figure 4 by the broken line). About 25 per cent in Study A and about 21 per cent in Study B held no opinion (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Independence from Pressure



14. If an important wealthy man got into trouble with the law and asked the publisher of The Sioux Valley News not to publish a news story about the matter, would the News print the story anyway or leave it out?

15. Some people say that most newspapers won't print anything that might make them lose advertising. Do you think this is true of The Sioux Valley News?

### Adequacy of News Content

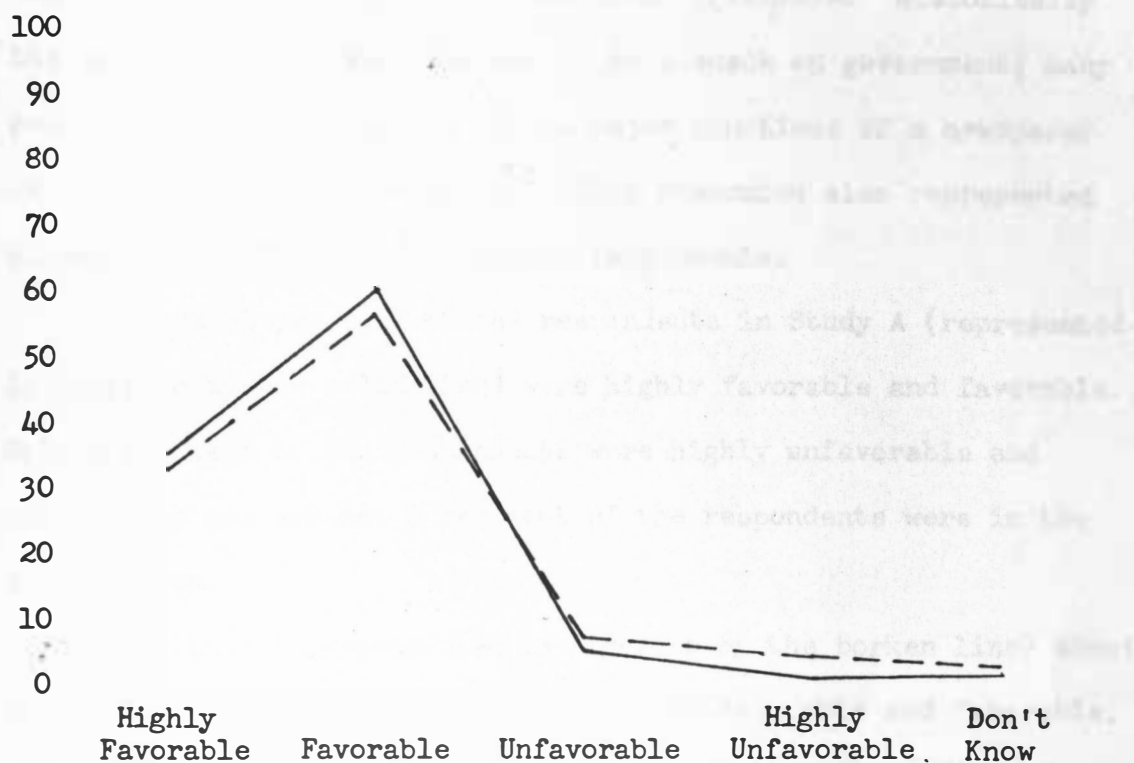
The adequacy of news content dimension deals with the completeness of coverage of local and regional news as measured by the reader's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way he is informed by the paper. As evident from Figure 5 this dimension produced strong feelings by the respondents favoring The Sioux Valley News.

In Study A (represented in Figure 5 by the solid line) about 95 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable toward The Sioux Valley News. About 4 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable and about 1 per cent remained in the neutral area.

About 89 per cent of the respondents in Study B (represented in Figure 5 by the Broken line) were highly favorable and favorable and about 9 per cent were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. In Study B about 2 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Adequacy of News Content



16. How much of the interesting local news do you feel The Sioux Valley News gives?

17. What do you think of this statement: The Sioux Valley News keeps the people of this area well informed?

18. When you finish reading The Sioux Valley News do you feel it has given you a clear idea of what has happened during the week.

### Check on Government

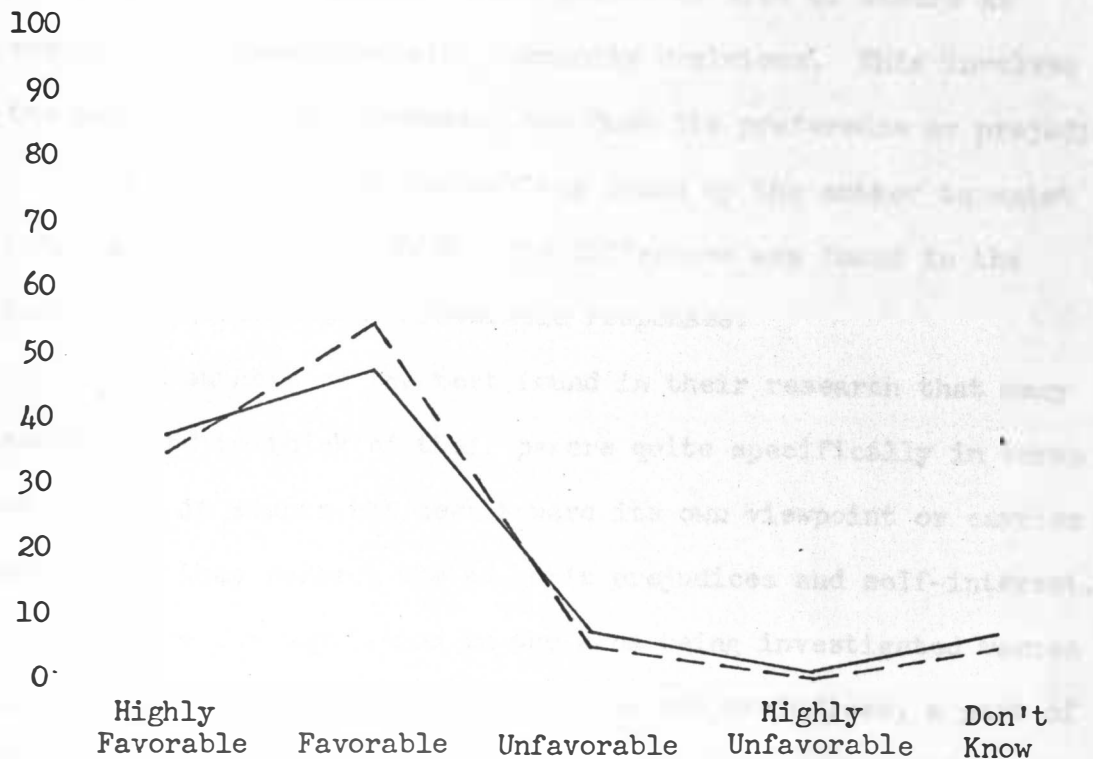
This dimension pertains to the newspaper's performance in reporting on elected and appointed local officials. Historically the newspaper has always claimed to be a check on government; many people still agree that one of the major functions of a newspaper is to be a check on governments. This dimension also represented strong favorable feelings from the respondents.

About 84 per cent of the respondents in Study A (represented in Figure 6 by the solid line) were highly favorable and favorable. Only 8 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable and another 8 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area.

In Study B (represented in Figure 6 by the broken line) about 89 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable. About 5 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. The remaining 5 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area. (Figure 6)

FIGURE 6

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Check on Government



19. Do you think The Sioux Valley News pays enough attention to what goes on in the state government?

21. Do you think The Sioux Valley News keeps its readers well informed about the way the local government conducts its business?

22. If a contractor did a bad paving job for the city, do you think The Sioux Valley News would find out about it and print the facts?

23. Does The Sioux Valley News help to see that laws are enforced in this area?

### Authoritarianism

This dimension measures the tolerance or intolerance of the newspaper for the objectives and points of view of others as evidenced in connection with community decisions. This involves the newspaper's self-interest, not just its preference or prejudice.

A significant difference was found by the author to exist between Study A and Study B. The difference was found in the highly unfavorable and unfavorable responses.

The authors of the test found in their research that many readers tend to think of their papers quite specifically in terms of whether it slants the news toward its own viewpoint or carries editorials that reflect the editor's prejudices and self-interest.

Since the population in the area being investigated varies in its political and economic loyalties and prejudices, a part of the respondents should invariably have an unfavorable attitude toward the newspaper. The Sioux Valley News habitually takes a definite stand or advocates a point of view about which there is not general community agreement.

About 90 per cent of the respondents in Study A (represented in Figure 7 by the solid line) were highly favorable and favorable while about 1 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. About 9 per cent were in the neutral area.

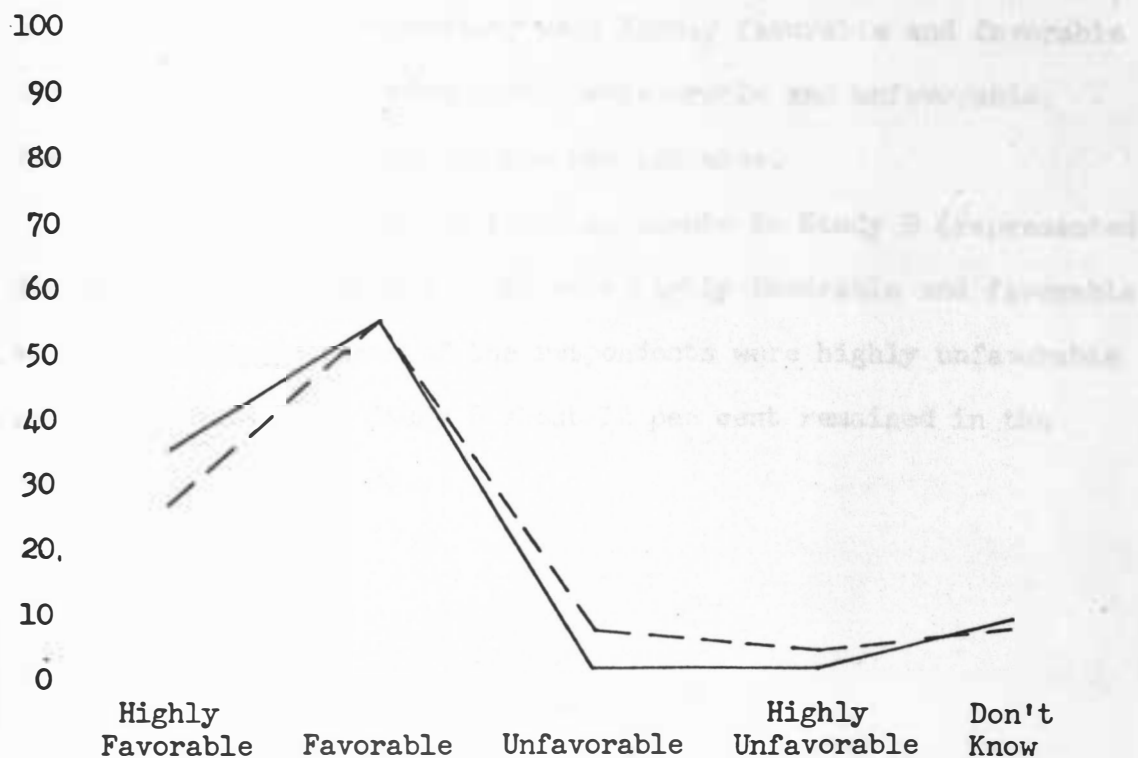
In Study B (represented in Figure 7 by the broken line) about 81 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable. Eleven per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and



unfavorable. About 8 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Authoritarianism



24. When some one in this area does something that helps the community, does The Sioux Valley News give him credit for it?

25. What about this statement: The Sioux Valley News not only advocates strongly the public improvements it itself wants, but campaigns just as hard for other improvements that are equally desirable.

### Confidence in Leadership and Political Issues and Candidates

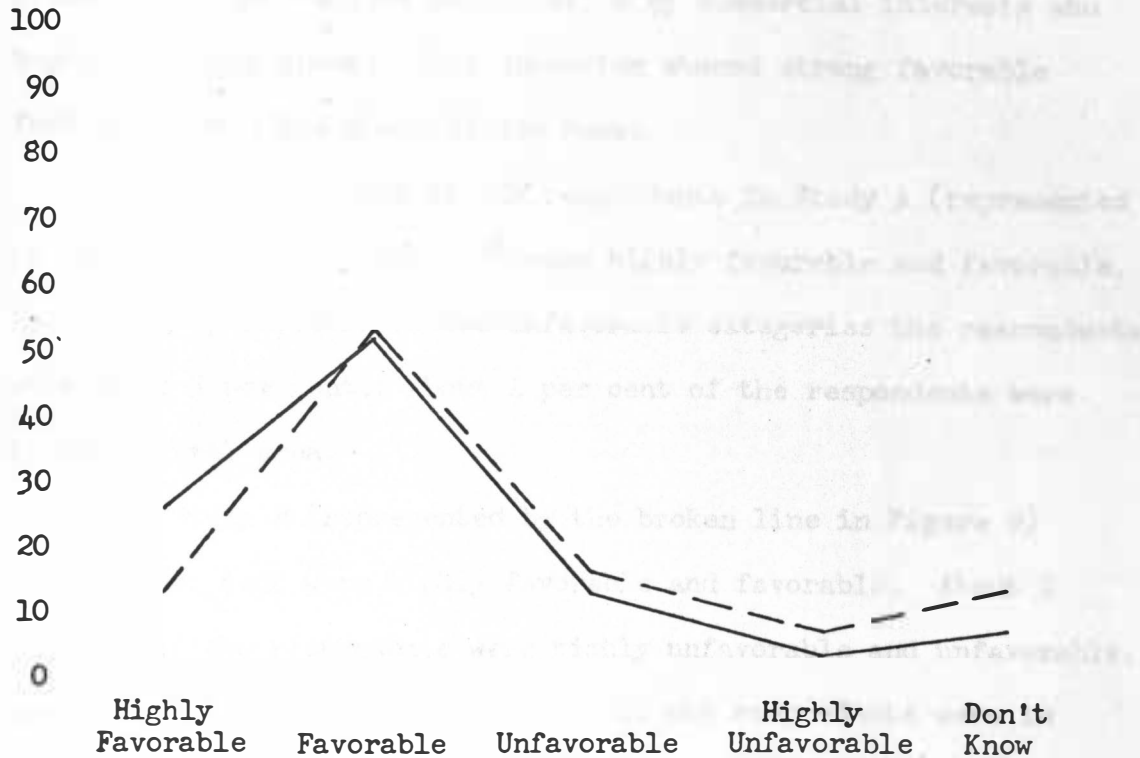
This dimension has to do with the reader's confidence in the newspaper's capability and sincerity in its recommendations to voters concerning candidates and issues.

In Study A (represented in Figure 8 by the solid line) about 77 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable and about 15 per cent were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. About 9 per cent remained in the neutral area.

About 64 per cent of the respondents in Study B (represented in Figure 8 by the broken line) were highly favorable and favorable while about 24 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. In Study B about 12 per cent remained in the neutral area (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of Confidence  
in Leadership on Political Issues and Candidates



26. If you were not sure about how to vote on a local bond issue, would you take the advice of The Sioux Valley News on how to vote?

28. When The Sioux Valley News prints an editorial, do you usually feel it has made a complete study of the subject being discussed?

### Responsibility for Advertising Content

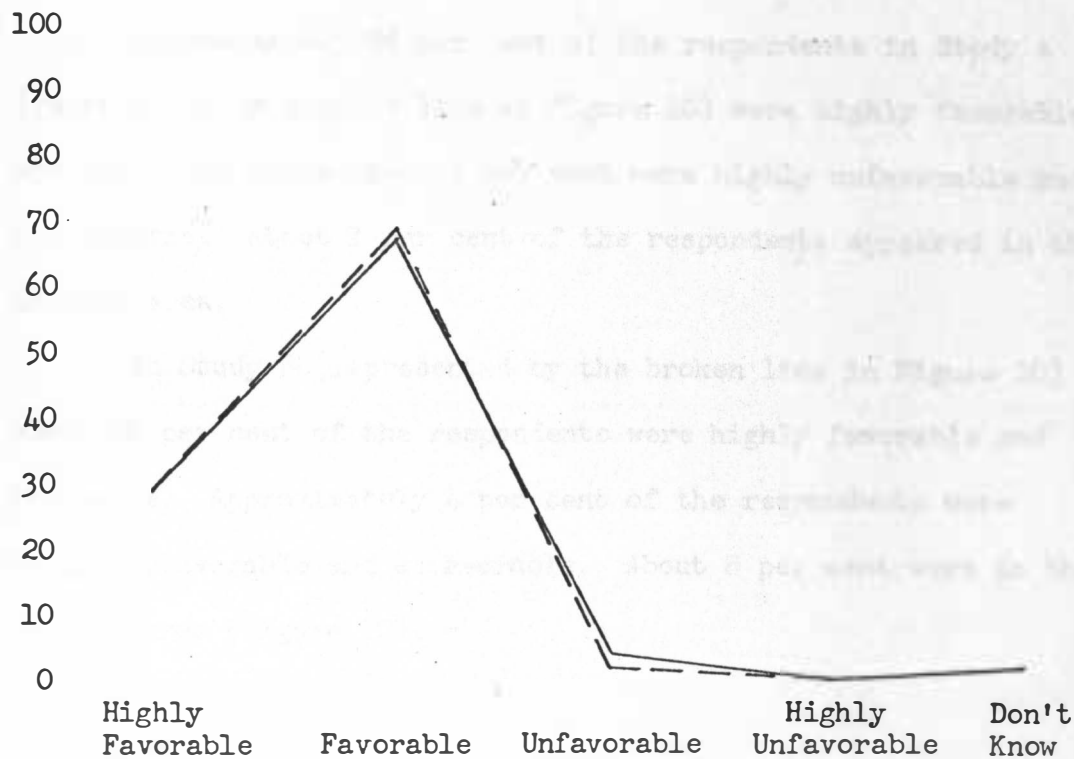
This dimension means the newspaper has a responsibility to protect its readers from exploitation by commercial interests who buy advertising space. This dimension showed strong favorable feelings toward The Sioux Valley News.

About 96 per cent of the respondents in Study A (represented by the solid line in Figure 9) were highly favorable and favorable. In the highly unfavorable and unfavorable categories the respondents were about 3 per cent. About 1 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area.

In Study B (represented by the broken line in Figure 9) about 97 per cent were highly favorable and favorable. About 2 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. Again in this study about 1 per cent of the respondents were in the neutral area (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions of  
Responsibility for Advertising Content



29. How much of the advertising in The Sioux Valley News  
do you feel you can believe?

### Human Worth and Dignity

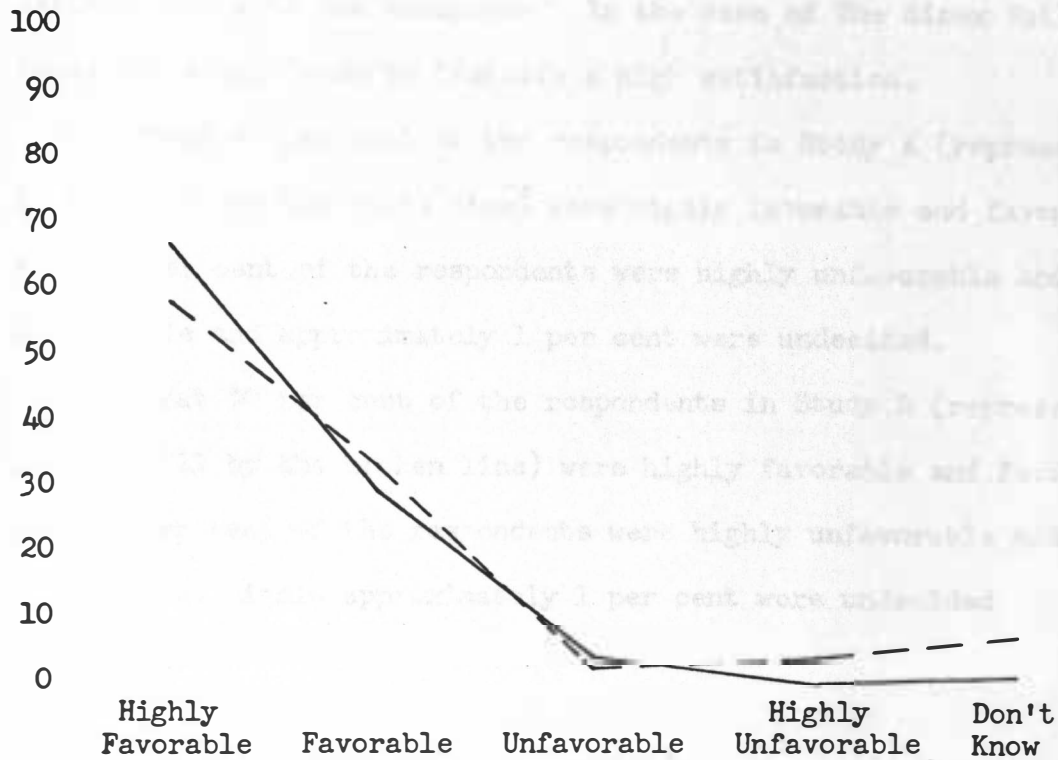
This dimension means the newspaper reminds the reader of the presence of people in society.

Approximately 96 per cent of the respondents in Study A (represented by a solid line in Figure 10) were highly favorable and favorable while about 3 per cent were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. About 1 per cent of the respondents appeared in the neutral area.

In Study B (represented by the broken line in Figure 10) about 88 per cent of the respondents were highly favorable and favorable. Approximately 4 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. About 8 per cent were in the neutral area (Figure 10).

FIGURE 10

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of Human Worth and Dignity



31. Does it seem to you that The Sioux Valley News would rather print bad things about people than good things?

### General Satisfaction

The dimension was designed to measure the reader's general satisfaction with the newspaper. In the case of The Sioux Valley News, the scores seem to indicate a high satisfaction.

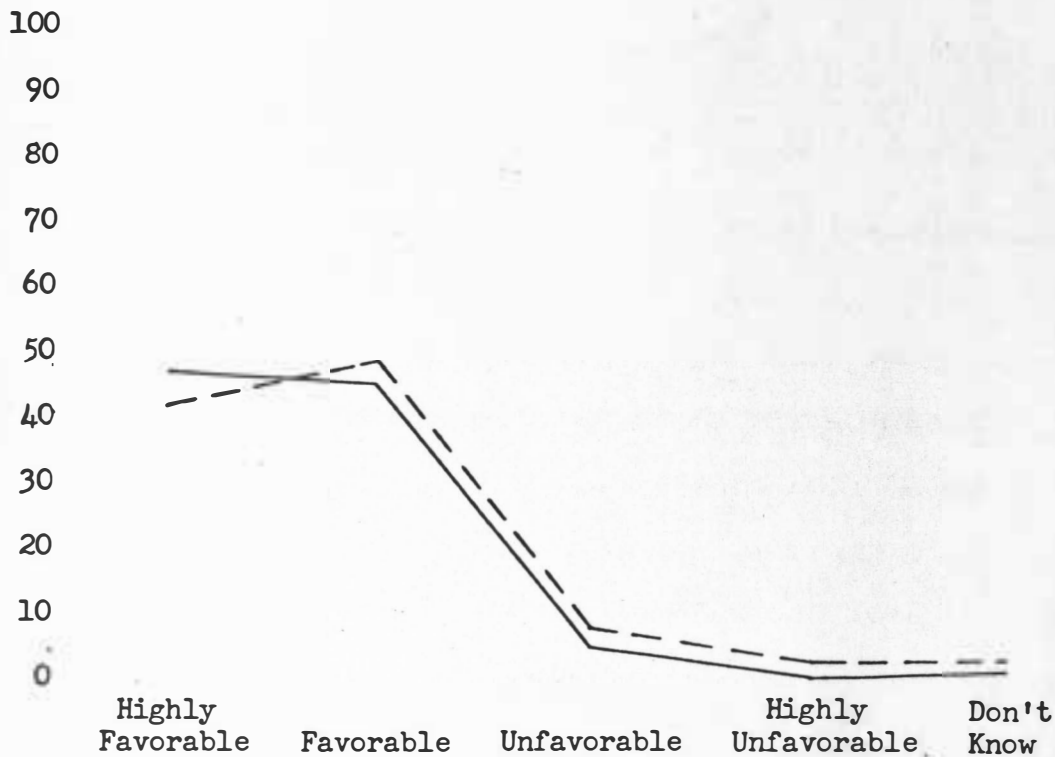
About 94 per cent of the respondents in Study A (represented in Figure 11 by the solid line) were highly favorable and favorable. About 5 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable and approximately 1 per cent were undecided.

About 90 per cent of the respondents in Study B (represented in Figure 11 by the broken line) were highly favorable and favorable. About 9 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. Again approximately 1 per cent were undecided (Figure 11).



FIGURE 11

Per cent Chart of Attitudinal Dimensions  
of General Satisfaction



32. On the whole, what sort of job do you think The Sioux Valley News is doing?

33. If a friend of yours moved to this area, would you advise him to subscribe to The Sioux Valley News?

34. How much do you feel you really need The Sioux Valley News?

35. If the presses at The Sioux Valley News broke down and the paper couldn't be printed again for two or three weeks, how much would you miss the paper?

36. Everything considered, what do you think of The  
Sioux Valley News?

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The primary objective for undertaking the investigation was to discover how the residents of the Canton area valued The Sioux Valley News and to see if their values would change in a year. In addition the author wanted to see if the residents thought The Sioux Valley News was an efficient and informative newspaper, a newspaper in which the readers could place their trust.

Another reason for the investigation was to determine how well The Sioux Valley News was regarded by citizens in the trade area. Was it highly regarded, or was it held in low esteem by the people? Still another reason was to measure attitudinal values on the particular dimensions the test encompassed.

The Brinton, Bush and Newell test to measure the public's attitude toward a newspaper was the instrument used in the investigation.

Twenty questions were eliminated from the original questionnaire as not being adaptable or suitable to a study being conducted on a weekly newspaper.

In addition to the standard questionnaire, ten demographic questions were added. The author had thought a difference might be found among these various categories. No differences were found.

A single random probability sample of 200 was used in each of two studies, one conducted in the spring of 1966 and one in the spring of 1967. Questionnaires were sent in each study to 100 women and 100 men. Of the 200 questionnaires sent out in Study A, 76 or 38 per cent were returned. In Study B of the 200 questionnaires sent out, 73 or 32 per cent were returned.

In Study A the respondents answered all the questions favorably. In Study B the respondents answered all the questions favorably except two.

Question number 10. How true is this statement: The names of some local people are in The Sioux Valley News very often, while interesting news about many other local people hardly ever gets in the paper.

Question number 12. Would it be easier for a personal friend of the owners of The Sioux Valley News to get a story in the paper than for a person who didn't know the owners at all?

The chi square test was used by the author to determine if a difference existed between Studies A and B in the attitudinal dimensions.

Responsibility for accuracy and authoritarianism were the only attitudinal dimensions where a significant difference was shown to exist between the two studies.

### Conclusions

It can be concluded that the residents of the Canton trade area generally favor The Sioux Valley News.

The respondents in Study A showed generally favorable attitudes toward the newspaper in answering all the questions. In Study B the respondents showed favorable attitudes toward the newspaper in answering all except two of the questions favorably.

Nine of the eleven attitudinal dimensions measured showed no significant difference at the .01 level, and the comparisons were favorable toward The Sioux Valley News. However a significant difference was shown to exist at the .01 level in the attitudinal dimensions of responsibility for accuracy and authoritarianism.

In responsibility for accuracy the difference was due to the number of respondents in Study B checking the "don't know" response. In Study B 17.6 per cent of the respondents checked this response compared with only 7 per cent in Study A.

The significant difference in the attitudinal dimension of authoritarianism was found by the author in the highly unfavorable and unfavorable responses. In Study A 1 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable. In Study B 11 per cent of the respondents were highly unfavorable and unfavorable.

The investigator further concluded that The Sioux Valley News is generally held in high esteem by the residents.

On the basis of these findings, it seems evident to the author that The Sioux Valley News is a well-read, well-used and informative newspaper in the Canton area. It seems apparent that the newspaper exerts influence on the residents, who believe it is a newspaper that portrays the feelings of the community.

### Recommendations for Further Study

Before the results of this investigation can be generalized to apply to all newspapers in the southeastern portion of South Dakota, further studies on weekly newspapers in this area of the state need to be accomplished.

It would be interesting and worthwhile to administer this test to readers of other weekly newspapers in Lincoln county and to compare the results with these findings.

Another possible study would be a comparative investigation between a democratic newspaper and a republican newspaper in southeastern South Dakota.

Another possible study would be where the results of a mail questionnaire is followed up by interviews to determine why a significant difference occurred in certain attitudinal dimensions.

The author believes further studies on weekly newspapers would benefit the weekly editors by providing more information about the attitudes of their readers.

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## APPENDIX

## Summary of Statistical Categories

	Total		Pop. Cont.	
	Study 1	Study 2	Study 1	Study 2
1	77	29	85	53
2	77	29	30	47
3	77	29	100	100
4	77	29	31	50
5	77	29	65	34
6	77	29	100	100
7	77	29	47	38
8	77	29	34	50
9	77	29	31	0
10	77	29	100	100
11	77	29	31	93
12	77	29	100	100



## APPENDIX A

## Classification of Different Categories

Category	Total		Per Cent	
	Study A	Study B	Study A	Study B
<u>Sex</u>				
Female	50	39	66	53
Male	26	34	34	47
Total	76	73	100	100
<u>Age</u>				
Under 50	39	44	51	60
Over 50	35	26	46	36
Not Answered	2	3	3	4
Total	76	73	100	100
<u>Education</u>				
Some College and College Graduates	32	42	42	58
High School Graduates	27	22	36	30
Grammar School	8	9	11	12
Not Answered	9	0	11	0
Total	76	73	100	100
<u>Residence</u>				
City	44	46	58	63
Farm	32	27	42	37
Total	76	73	100	100

## APPENDIX B

## Number and Percentage of Favorable and Unfavorable

## Answers and the Questions Not Answered in Study A

Questions	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not Answered	
1.	74	97.4	2	2.6	0	0
2.	55	72.4	11	14.5	10	13.1
3.	36	47.4	34	44.7	6	7.9
4.	57	75.0	16	21.0	3	4.0
5.	50	65.8	13	17.1	13	17.1
6.	74	97.4	1	1.3	1	1.3
7.	51	67.1	7	9.2	18	23.7
8.	49	64.5	20	26.3	7	9.2
9.	34	44.7	31	40.8	11	14.5
10.	43	56.6	14	18.4	19	25.0
11.	47	61.9	20	26.3	9	11.8
12.	57	75.0	18	23.7	1	1.3
13.	28	36.8	23	30.3	25	32.9
14.	48	63.2	15	19.7	13	17.1
15.	73	96.1	2	2.6	1	1.3
16.	70	92.1	5	6.6	1	1.3
17.	74	97.4	2	2.6	0	0
18.	61	80.3	11	14.5	4	5.2
19.	65	85.5	4	5.3	7	9.2
20.	74	97.4	1	1.3	1	1.3
21.	57	75.0	7	9.2	12	15.8
22.	72	94.7	1	1.3	3	4.0
23.	65	85.5	1	1.3	10	13.2
24.	46	60.5	21	27.6	9	11.9
25.	71	93.4	1	1.3	4	5.3
26.	73	96.1	2	2.6	1	1.3
27.	73	96.1	2	2.6	1	1.3
28.	75	98.7	1	1.3	0	0
29.	71	93.4	2	2.6	3	4.0
30.	75	98.7	1	1.3	0	0
31.	66	86.9	10	13.1	0	0
32.	73	96.0	3	4.0	0	0

## APPENDIX C

## Number and Percentage of Favorable and Unfavorable

## Answers and the Questions Not Answered in Study B

Questions	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not Answered	
1.	69	95.8	2	2.8	1	1.4
2.	32	44.4	13	18.1	27	37.5
3.	40	55.5	22	30.6	10	13.9
4.	41	56.9	19	26.4	12	16.7
5.	52	72.2	14	19.5	6	8.3
6.	49	68.1	17	23.6	6	8.3
7.	70	97.2	2	2.8	0	0
8.	46	63.9	9	12.5	17	23.6
9.	41	56.9	20	27.8	11	15.3
10.	25	34.7	40	55.6	7	9.7
11.	42	58.3	18	25.0	12	16.7
12.	29	40.3	30	41.7	13	18.0
13.	48	66.7	24	33.3	0	0
14.	38	52.8	20	27.8	14	19.4
15.	40	55.6	16	22.2	16	22.2
16.	66	91.7	4	5.6	2	2.7
17.	61	84.7	10	13.9	1	1.4
18.	65	90.3	6	8.3	1	1.4
19.	63	87.5	6	8.3	3	4.2
20.	54	75.0	2	2.8	16	22.2
21.	67	93.1	0	0	5	6.9
22.	60	83.3	4	5.6	8	11.1
23.	66	91.7	6	8.3	0	0
24.	68	94.4	3	4.2	1	1.4
25.	49	68.1	13	18.0	10	13.9
26.	36	50.0	23	31.9	13	18.1
27.	37	51.4	27	37.5	8	11.1
28.	56	77.8	11	15.3	5	6.9
29.	70	97.2	1	1.4	1	1.4
30.	63	87.5	3	4.2	6	8.3
31.	68	94.4	3	4.2	1	1.4
32.	67	93.1	2	2.8	3	4.2
33.	67	93.1	5	6.9	0	0

Questions	Favorable		Unfavorable		Not Answered	
34.	57	79.2	13	18.0	2	2.8
35.	63	87.5	9	12.5	0	0

## APPENDIX D

## Questions Eliminated from Complete Brinton-Bush-Newell Test

(Response categories have been eliminated)

1. In your experience, do headlines in the \_\_\_\_\_ give you an accurate idea of what really happened?
2. Which, if either, has the better chance of getting his side of a story about a local strike into the \_\_\_\_\_: the head of the business or a labor union official?
3. If a Negro got in a serious fight with a white man in this area, how fair would the \_\_\_\_\_ be toward the Negro?
4. Does the \_\_\_\_\_ print both sides of issues that involve different races?
5. If a big local advertiser called up the publisher of the \_\_\_\_\_ and asked him not to print a certain story, would the \_\_\_\_\_ print the story anyway or leave it out?
6. How well does the \_\_\_\_\_ keep its readers up to date on national and world affairs?
7. What about this statement: I can be as well informed by reading the \_\_\_\_\_ as by reading any other paper I can get.
8. If the people who run the \_\_\_\_\_ had to choose between their own personal interests and the best interests of the whole area, which would they choose?
9. Do you think the \_\_\_\_\_ tries to run this area to suit itself?
10. How many people in this area pay attention to the \_\_\_\_\_'s advice on how to vote for President of the U.S.?
11. Do you think the people who run the \_\_\_\_\_ believe what is said in the advertisements the paper prints?
12. Some people say some newspapers don't care what kind of ads they print so long as they make money. Do you think this is true of the \_\_\_\_\_?

13. How often have you read something in the \_\_\_\_\_ that gave you a "lift"--something that made you feel that goodness rules the world more than greed and hate?
14. Do the news items in the \_\_\_\_\_ suggest that there are more people in the world with weak character than with strong character?
15. How often does the \_\_\_\_\_ print something that makes you feel there are a lot of good people in the world and not just a lot of bad people?
16. How often does the \_\_\_\_\_ report events in which the people involved show qualities of courage or sacrifice?
17. How often does the \_\_\_\_\_ print pictures that over-emphasize sex?
18. How often does the \_\_\_\_\_ print news about crimes committed in such communities as New York, Hollywood and Chicago?
19. How often have you read something in the \_\_\_\_\_ that you think children or teen-agers should not read?
20. When the \_\_\_\_\_ arrives, how much do you usually want to read it?

## APPENDIX E

Example of Covering Letter That Accompanied  
the Mailing of the Questionnaire

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is a questionnaire designed to get some opinions of the readers about The Sioux Valley News.

The response to the questionnaire will be used in a project in journalism at South Dakota State University. In order to be of use, it is important that you be as honest and frank in your answers as you can be. It is not necessary for you to sign your name on the questionnaire, and all replies are confidential. The editor is aware of this study and is cooperating in it.

Although the questionnaire appears long, it will take only a few minutes of your time. Please complete the questionnaire and return it, in the enclosed envelope, as soon as it is convenient. Thank you for your help. The information will be of much use to us.

Sincerely,

Journalism Department  
South Dakota State University

APPENDIX F<sup>n</sup>

## Example of an Individual Questionnaire

Sent to Each Person

PLEASE CHECK ONE RESPONSE IN EACH QUESTION

1. How accurate is The Sioux Valley News in its local news stories?  
☐ Very accurate. ☐ Fairly accurate. ☐ Not so accurate.  
☐ Not at all accurate.
2. If you heard a news item over the radio and then a conflicting version of the same story in The Sioux Valley News which one would you believe? ☐ The radio, certainly. ☐ The radio, probably. ☐ The News, probably. ☐ The News, certainly.  
☐ Don't know.
3. How often does The Sioux Valley News in its news columns and headlines, try to make a happening sound more exciting than it really is? ☐ Very often. ☐ Once in a while. ☐ Hardly ever. ☐ Never. ☐ Don't know.
4. Do you think The Sioux Valley News usually gives as much space to speeches by a candidate the paper is against as it does to speeches by a candidate it is for? ☐ Yes, always. ☐ Yes, most of the time. ☐ No, not very often. ☐ No, almost never. ☐ Don't know.
5. Does The Sioux Valley News usually present both sides of important political issues? ☐ Yes, always. ☐ Yes, most of the time. ☐ No, not very often. ☐ No, almost never. ☐ Don't know.
6. If The Sioux Valley News was against a man who was running for public office, would it be fair to him or not? ☐ Not at all fair. ☐ Not so fair. ☐ Pretty fair. ☐ Very fair.  
☐ Don't know.
7. Does The Sioux Valley News seem fair to all religious groups?  
☐ Yes, very fair. ☐ Yes, pretty fair. ☐ No, not very fair. ☐ No, not at all fair. ☐ Don't know.



8. Do you think The Sioux Valley News really cares about the poor people in this town? ( )Yes, very much. ( )Yes, some.  
( )No, not very much. ( )No, not at all. ( )Don't know.
9. Does a wealthy man get better treatment in The Sioux Valley News than a poor man? ( )No, not at all. ( )No, very little.  
( )Yes, some. better. ( )Yes, a whole lot. ( )Don't know.
10. How true is this statement: The names of some local people are in The Sioux Valley News very often, while interesting news about many other local people hardly ever gets in the paper. ( )There's a lot of truth in it. ( )There's some truth in it. ( )There is very little truth in it. ( )There is no truth in it. ( )Don't know.
11. If a good friend of the owners of The Sioux Valley News got arrested for drunken driving, would the Sioux Valley print the story? ( )No, certainly not. ( )No, probably not. ( )Yes, probably. ( )Yes, certainly. ( )Don't know.
12. Would it be easier for a personal friend of the owners of The Sioux Valley News to get a story in the paper than for a person who didn't know the owners at all? ( )No, certainly not. ( )No, probably not. ( )Yes, probably. ( )Yes, certainly.  
( )Don't know.
13. Does the amount of money a man has make a difference in the treatment he gets in The Sioux Valley News? ( )No, none at all. ( )No, very little. ( )Yes, some difference. ( )Yes, a lot of difference.
14. If an important wealthy man got into trouble with the law and asked the publisher of The Sioux Valley News not to publish a news story about the matter, would the paper print the story anyway or leave it out? ( )Would leave it out, certainly.  
( )Would leave it out, probably. ( )Would print it anyway, probably. ( )Would print it anyway certainly. ( )Don't know.
15. Some people say that most newspapers won't print anything that might make them lose advertising. Do you think this is true of The Sioux Valley News? ( )No, certainly not. ( )No, probably not. ( )Yes, probably. ( )Yes, certainly. ( )Don't know.
16. How much of the interesting local news do you feel The Sioux Valley News gives? ( )Nearly all of it. ( )Most of it.  
( )Very little of it. ( )Almost none. ( )Don't know.

17. What do you think of this statement: The Sioux Valley News keeps the people of this area well informed. ( )Strongly agree. ( )Agree. ( )Disagree. ( )Strongly disagree. ( )Don't know.
18. When you finish reading The Sioux Valley News, do you feel it has given you a clear idea of what has happened during the week? ( )Yes, very clear. ( )Yes, fairly clear. ( )No, not so very clear. ( )No, not at all. ( )Don't know.
19. Do you think The Sioux Valley News pays enough attention to what goes on in the state government? ( )No, it never does. ( )No, sometimes it doesn't. ( )Yes, it usually does. ( )Yes, it always does. ( )Don't know.
20. What kind of watch does The Sioux Valley News keep for graft in the city and county governments? ( )A very good watch. ( )A good watch. ( )A rather poor watch. ( )A very poor watch. ( )Don't know.
21. Do you think The Sioux Valley News keeps its readers well informed about the way the local government conducts its business? ( )Very poorly indeed. ( )Not so well informed. ( )Fairly well informed. ( )Very well informed. ( )Don't know.
22. If a contractor did a bad paving job for the city, do you think The Sioux Valley News would find out about it and print the facts? ( )Yes, certainly. ( )Yes, probably. ( )No, probably not. ( )No, certainly not. ( )Don't know.
23. Does The Sioux Valley News help to see that laws are enforced in this area? ( )Yes, it always does. ( )Yes, it usually does. ( )No, sometimes it does. ( )No, it never does.
24. When someone in this area does something that helps the community, does The Sioux Valley News usually give him credit for it? ( )No, it never does. ( )No, it hardly ever does. ( )Yes, it usually does. ( )Yes, it always does. ( )Don't know.
25. What about this statement: The Sioux Valley News not only advocates strongly the public improvements it itself wants, but campaigns just as hard for other improvements that are equally desirable. ( )Strongly agree. ( )Agree. ( )Disagree. ( )Strongly disagree. ( )Don't know.
26. If you were not sure about how to vote on a local bond issue, would you take the advice of The Sioux Valley News on how to vote? ( )Yes, certainly. ( )Yes, probably. ( )No, probably not. ( )No, certainly not. ( )Don't know.

27. If you did not understand one of the measures on a state election ballot, would you take the advice of The Sioux Valley News on how to vote? ( )Yes, certainly. ( )Yes, probably. ( )No, probably not. ( )No, certainly not. ( )Don't know.
28. When The Sioux Valley News prints an editorial, do you usually feel it has made a complete study of the subject being discussed? ( )Yes, very complete. ( )Yes, fairly complete. ( )No, not very complete. ( )No, not complete at all. ( )Don't know.
29. How much of the advertising in The Sioux Valley News do you feel you can believe? ( )None of it. ( )Not much of it. ( )Most of it. ( )All of it. ( )Don't know.
30. Does The Sioux Valley News allow local stores to make false claims in their advertisements in the paper? ( )Yes, all the time. ( )Yes, some time. ( )No, most of the time. ( )No, never. ( )Don't know.
31. Does it seem to you that The Sioux Valley News would rather print bad things about people than good things? ( )No, absolutely not. ( )No, not entirely. ( )Yes, pretty much so. ( )Yes, to a great extent. ( )Don't know.
32. On the whole, what sort of job do you think The Sioux Valley News is doing? ( )A very good job. ( )A good job. ( )A poor job. ( )A very poor job. ( )Don't know.
33. If a friend of yours moved to this area, would you advise him to subscribe to The Sioux Valley News? ( )No, certainly not. ( )No, probably not. ( )Yes, probably. ( )Yes, certainly. ( )Don't know.
34. How much do you feel you really need The Sioux Valley News? ( )Not at all. ( )Not much. ( )Some. ( )Very much. ( )Don't know.
35. If the presses at The Sioux Valley News broke down and the paper could not be printed again for two or three weeks, how much would you miss the paper? ( )A great deal. ( )Quite a lot. ( )A little. ( )Not at all. ( )Don't know.
36. Everything considered, what do you think of The Sioux Valley News? ( )An excellent newspaper. ( )A good newspaper. ( )A passable newspaper. ( )Not much of a paper. ( )Don't know.

Sex. ( )Male. ( )Female

Age. \_\_\_\_ Years.

Education. ( )Grammar school. ( )High School. ( )Some college.  
( )College.

Marital Status. ( )Single. ( )Married. ( )Widowed. ( )Divorced.

Length of resident in the Canton area. \_\_\_\_ Years.

Where do you live? ( )City. ( )Farm.

Do you subscribe to another newspaper? ( )Daily. ( )Weekly.  
( )None.

Please check the situation that applies to you. ( )I subscribe to

The Sioux Valley News. ( )I do not read The Sioux Valley News.

( )I purchase The Sioux Valley News each week.